



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

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## France

### Pest/Disease Occurrences

## Half of France hit by Blue Tongue Disease, Cattle Exports Impacted

### 2007

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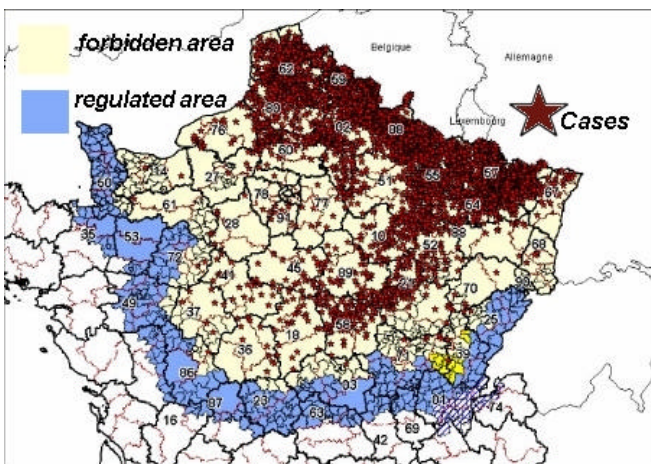
**Report Highlights:**

Since detection of the first cases in northern France in August 2006, the Blue Tongue Disease has swiftly spread southward, affecting more than half of France to date. The disease has negatively impacted the French cattle industry, blocking exports valued at € 965 million (\$ 1.4 billion) of live animals in 2006, mainly to Italy. With more flexible EU regulations, exports may resume soon. In the meantime, French Ministry of Agriculture released € 13.5 million (\$ 20 million) in subsidies to French cattle farmers and intends to vaccinate animals in the spring of 2008.

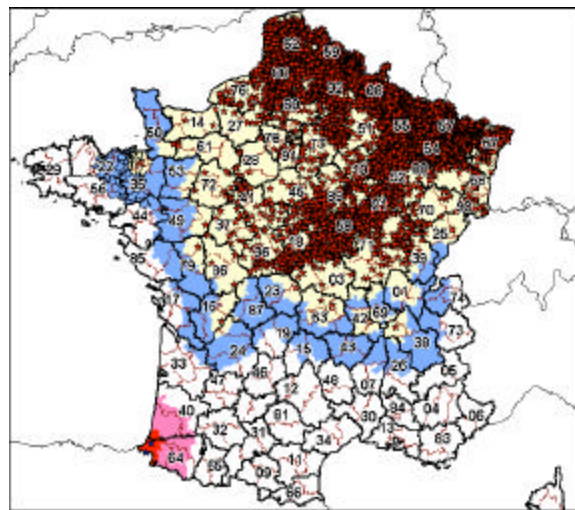
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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Annual Report  
Paris [FR1]  
[FR]

Since the first farms were infected by the Blue Tongue Disease in northern France in August 2006, the disease has been swiftly spreading southward. The maps below show the expansion of the disease-affected area between October 25 and November 28, 2007.

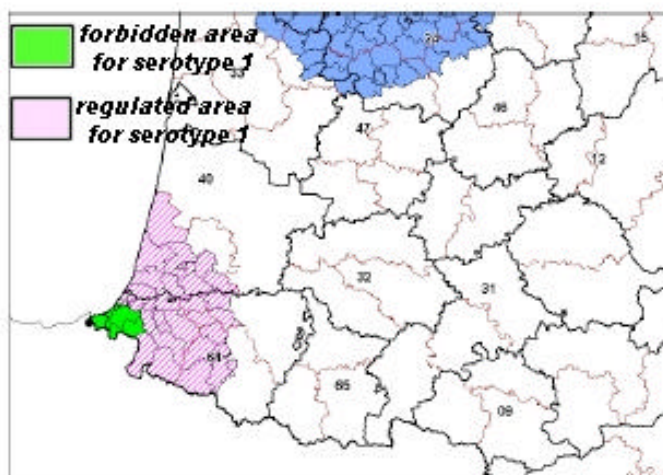


Extent of disease as of 10/25  
(Source Ministry of Agriculture)



Extent of disease as of 11/28

As of November 22, 2007, more than half of French territory is impacted. On November 28, 10607 cases (all of serotype 8) were diagnosed (compared to less than 2500 cases in early October 2007). This rapid spread suggests that the virus may become endemic in the northern half of France



(Source Ministry of Agriculture)

In early November 2007, Spanish authorities announced three cases of serotype 1 BTB near the French border. Consequently, France established other forbidden and regulated areas on the French side of the border (see map at left)

The disease has severely impacted the French cattle industry. Initially, animal movements within the forbidden area were banned and exports of live animals from the forbidden and regulated areas were prohibited (EU decisions 2000/75/CE and 2005/393/CE).

France is a major exporter of adult cattle. Total French live cattle exports in CY 2006 were valued at € 965 million (\$ 1.4 billion), of which € 792 million (\$ 1.2 billion) were for young bulls for fattening and for beef, € 106 million (\$ 156 million) were for heifers and the remaining were for calves and other categories. Most of those animals are exported within the EU, mainly to Italy (and to a lesser extent to Spain).  
French exports of live cattle

'1000 heads	2006	Jan-June 2007	Jan-June 2006	% Difference
Live cattle over 80kgs	1,238	622	577	- 7.2 %
Of which to the EU	1,229	613	574	- 6.3 %
Of which to Italy	1,042	526	476	- 9,5 %
Export of live calves (under 80kgs)	150	67	68	+1 %
Of which to the EU	150	67	68	+1 %
Of which to Italy	55	30	16	- 45 %
Of which to Spain	88	37	46	+ 24 %

(Source Office de l'Elevage)

While in 2006, the disease was contained in the northern part of country, which is a minor producer of live beef cattle, the 2007 epidemic swiftly hit southern regions such as Burgundy where such production is important, with large Charolais herds producing young bulls (uncastrated) exported to Italy for fattening. The closure of the export market was an economic disaster for the agricultural sectors of those regions. The French Ministry of Agriculture released 13.5 million (\$ 20 million) euros in short-term subsidies to farmers hit by the blockade of their animals.

However, on October 3, following a French request, the EU Commission approved a softening of its regulations, which was published on October 27. Animals will be authorized for export, providing they have been protected for 14 days against the vector insect and after serological tests to BTB have been negative prior to leaving the farm. After some administrative delays, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture agreed to re-open its border on November 6 to French cattle.

The French Ministry of Agriculture has also launched an invitation to tender for 33 million doses of BTB vaccine. However, due to technical delays, this vaccine will not be available before April 2008. But the upcoming winter, with lower temperatures which will kill the vector insect, will hopefully slow down the extension of the disease in France.

It is still difficult to precisely assess the economic impact of the disease on the French cattle industry, but it will undoubtedly impact cattle farmers, who were just recovering in the aftermath of the BSE crisis. FAS Paris will continue to monitor the situation in the framework of EU consolidated livestock reporting.

Related reports:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
FR6046	Two Cases Of Blue Tongue Disease in Cows Confirmed in France <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200706/146291415.pdf">http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200706/146291415.pdf</a>	09/01/2006
GM7028	Update on Bluetongue Disease in Germany <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200707/146291646.pdf">http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200707/146291646.pdf</a>	07/10/2007
GM7045	Bluetongue Update: Disease continues to Spread in Germany <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200710/146292774.pdf">http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200710/146292774.pdf</a>	10/19/2007
E47060	Livestock and Products Annual <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200707/146291787.pdf">http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200707/146291787.pdf</a>	07/20/2007